



# THE URBAN PAGE

## Changing Scenes on North 27th

A lot has happened to Lincoln since 1998 when the **North 27th Street Corridor and Environs Plan** was adopted, but the concepts identified in the plan continue to guide revitalization of the North 27th Street Corridor.

The corridor is a better place to live and do business today, in part because of completed projects like the Police Station at 27th & Holdrege, the new Walgreens and McDonalds, the ALPS grocery store, and the Sterling Village retail development. Still more projects are in various stages of completion.

### Potter Street Area

One element of this project, the closure of Potter Street between 26th and 27th Streets, is now in the final design stage. Project partners - Salvation Army, Lincoln Police Department, Cedars Youth Services, and Urban Development - will create a campus-like setting from the Police Station to Pentzer Park. The vacated street will become a parking lot that connects the block to the south to Pentzer Park to the north. The project will include new sidewalks, landscaping, and new park equipment.

### Northbridge Community Center

Good weather during construction season may result in an early completion of the Cedars Northbridge Community Center. The grand opening is planned for the Spring of 2004. Collaborators with Cedars Youth Services and Urban Development in this project are Clinton Elementary School, Davis Design, the Clinton Neighborhood Organization, and the North 27th Street Business and Civic Association.



*Above: Thanks to mild winter weather, construction of the Cedars Northbridge Community Center is ahead of schedule. Surrounding neighborhoods are looking forward to the grand opening for the Spring of 2004.*

*Below: With completion targeted for this Fall, construction of the People's Health Center has progressed quickly. News should soon be available about the federal grant that the Lincoln-Lancaster Health Department applied for on behalf of the new center.*



### People's Health Center

Construction has begun on the People's Health Center at 27th & Y Streets. Pending final funding approval from the federal government, this new facility will provide the surrounding area with a primary care health facility. In addition, the new structure will compliment the area adjacent to the future pedestrian/bike trail bridge.

### Sterling Village: the Midas Lot

Final construction documents are ready for the former Midas building site. It will be purchased by Sterling Village and Vina Market to provide extra customer parking.

### 27th & P Redevelopment

The recent demolition of two badly dilapidated houses, along the west side of 27th and south of P Street, was the first step toward redeveloping the north half of the block between 26th and 27th, O and P Streets. Urban Development will send out a Request for Proposals (RFP) later this year. Whatever the future project is, it will include neighborhood and business input and it will compliment the current land use by acting as a transition between neighborhood residential uses and 27th & O Street commercial uses.

*For further information, call 441-7606.*

# HOME OWNERSHIP MONTH & OLD MILL VILLAGE

June is *Home Ownership Month* and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development designated *Old Mill Village* as one of their stops for the nation-wide celebration tour. On June 18th, the regional offices of HUD and Mayor Coleen Seng honored the many partners dedicated to affordable housing in Lincoln.

Old Mill Village is a new development with 133 affordable new single-family homes. *Nebraska Housing Resource (NHR)*, a not-for-profit affordable housing provider and the project developer, made the first 15 lots available to participating builders earlier this year. These homes are now in various stages of construction and are scheduled for completion this summer.

NHR, working through the *City of Lincoln*, purchased the land for the project from the *Nebraska Department of Roads*. Purchase money was provided by *Urban Development*, the *Nebraska Department of Economic Development* and *TierOne Bank*.

Participating low-to-moderate income, first-time buyers are required to complete home buyer training through *Neighborhoods, Inc.* which will also provide downpayment assistance at closing.

The local lenders use *NIFA (Nebraska Investment Finance Authority)* funds or other mortgage products to provide the financing to individual buyers and *Fannie Mae* will purchase the eligible loans.



*Old Mill Village, in the vicinity of S.W. 12th and W. South Streets, was a beehive of activity this spring as construction began on the first 15 of 133 new homes.*

## UDD's ROLE IN E.D. EFFORTS

On May 21, 2003 a new *Economic Development Strategic Marketing Plan for Lincoln and Lancaster County* was unveiled to more than 700 interested business and civic leaders. These leaders were eager to move beyond the challenges created by a lack of public and private collaboration, a lack of entrepreneurial development, a lack of trust among organizations, and a disconnected strategy between UNL and the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development (LPED).

The plan, prepared by *Angelou Economics* of Austin, Texas, contains a culmination of findings from extensive research, analysis and observations based on significant input collected from over 1,200 individuals at focus groups, interviews, on-line surveys, and team discussions. The plan outlines economic development goals, strategies and an implementation plan for Lincoln to follow over the next five years to create higher paying jobs and a diverse economy. It clearly identifies the roles for LPED, the City of Lincoln and other partnering organizations in economic development while providing a new brand identity theme and a marketing strategy to accomplish growth.

The study recommends that *LPED* become the "clearinghouse" for economic development initiatives. Its staff should develop expertise in several target industries identified in the study. In addition, LPED should:

- ☐ build a communications network among all the Lincoln area economic development organizations,

- ☐ encourage UNL and other higher education institutions to become active in economic development, and

- ☐ promote regional cooperation with Omaha and state economic development efforts.

While any number of economic development organizations will be involved in the implementation of these recommendations, the *Urban Development Department (UDD)* will also play a significant role. The study recommends that UDD should:

- ☐ continue to act as the champion and funding source for improvements downtown and in other core neighborhood areas, especially in blighted areas,

- ☐ coordinate with workforce training providers and the private sector to continue to fund workforce training programs, and

- ☐ continue to identify and finance redevelopment projects and business expansions which benefit Lincoln's low- to moderate-income residents and neighborhoods.

UDD will also be involved in the *Lincoln Economic Development Council (LEDC)*, a newly-created team of economic development professionals representing the City, County, LES, LPED, UNL, State of Nebraska and Aquila. This core team will be responsible for overseeing business retention and expansion efforts, entrepreneurial development and new business recruitment.

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# WELL-TIMED WORDS

## Star Rental Recognition

Heart of Lincoln's new Star Rental program identifies and recognizes rental properties that neighborhood residents consider to be assets to their neighborhood. Neighborhood associations nominate properties based on criteria related to tenant screening, property maintenance and security, lease enforcement, and cooperation with neighborhood residents. Properties selected for recognition are featured in publicity about the program and their landlords will be eligible for a variety of rewards.

The goal of the program is to encourage all landlords in the Heart of Lincoln neighborhoods – North Bottoms, Downtown, Everett, South Salt Creek, Woods Park, Near South, Hartley, Malone, Clinton and University Place – to improve and maintain their properties.

Contact Lori Vidlak at Heart of Lincoln with questions or comments: 476-5422 or [lori@centerstar.com](mailto:lori@centerstar.com).

## New WI Board Members

Mayor Coleen J. Seng appointed the following individuals to the **Greater Lincoln Workforce Investment Board**:

- ◆ **Houston Doan**, Manager of Operation ABLE for the Lincoln Area Agency on Aging
- ◆ **Jim Fram**, President of the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce

Welcome to these new members! The Board has set its next meeting for September 10, 2003, at The Cornhusker Hotel.

## One Stop Center News

**Federal Performance Grant:** The One Stop Career Center will share in a \$750,000 statewide federal incentive grant for exceeding performance under the Workforce Investment Act. These funds will be available to expand and upgrade the system resources available at the One Stop Career Center and for staff development and training.

Two additional projects are planned with these funds. One project will increase the number of "English as a Second Language for Employment" classes available, and the second project will develop a comprehensive career management system for use by all Nebraskans. Nebraska was one of sixteen states to qualify for these incentive

funds by exceeding the federal performance standards in workforce development and educational programs.

### **One Stop Career Center**

**Usage:** The number of visits to the One Stop Career Center continues to grow. As of the end of April 2003, over 8,000 visits had been recorded at the One Stop Career Center since January 1. This is an increase of over 2,700 visits for the same time period in 2002.

## Entertainment Center Update

Lights! Cameras! Entertainment Center moving toward Action! The long awaited downtown entertainment center, which will be located between O and P, 11th & 12th Streets, will be one step closer to construction this Summer when the City completes acquisition of all the O Street properties that will be demolished for the project. This excludes Sartor Hammon, the Marz Bar and Continental Commons which are not part of the project and will not be acquired.

Demolition of project properties will begin this summer, clearing the way for construction of the **Douglas Grand**, a 14 - screen theater complex which is expected to open in late 2004.

In addition to preparing the site for construction, as part of the agreement between the City and Douglas Theaters, the City hired Erickson Sullivan Architects. The Lincoln-based design firm is working with Douglas Theaters to address design issues such as facade treatment, marquee design, and configuration of the drop-off lane on P Street. To gain public perspective on the evolving design of this important project, the City convened two public design workshops during June.

## 12th St. Arts Corridor

In May, the 12th Street Arts Corridor project, which extends along 12th Street from Q to N Streets, moved into construction phase



*The dedication for Eagles View Park took place on May 8th, culminating a two year effort that involved the Arnold Heights Neighborhood Association, the Parks and Recreation Department, Lincoln Housing Authority, and the Urban Development Department. \$18,245 in Community Development Block Grant Funds provided the playground equipment featured in the photo.*

with the selection of Piedmont Construction as general contractor. Construction will begin in June and will include repairing portions of the sidewalk and underground vaults, the addition of distinctive street lighting, and new planting areas at the corners and mid-blocks. The corridor will include experimental planting techniques to support additional urban trees. Importantly, the project will identify areas where public art can be displayed along the corridor. A workshop focusing on the Arts Corridor concept was held on June 18th and at that meeting a committee was formed to help coordinate future art placements along 12th Street.

## Staffing Changes

In June, Sean McClatchey joined Urban Development staff as a housing rehabilitation specialist. His background of mortgage lending and construction will be very useful as he settles into the new job. Of course, not having to commute to Omaha every day will help, too!

Sean is stepping in for Mike Nelson who retired in March. We miss Mike, but we look

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## QUARTERLY QUOTE

*"I am proud to be a resident of Lincoln and I am honored to serve Lincoln as its 50th Mayor. Lincoln is facing many challenges. But we have faced challenges before and emerged a stronger city. It takes hard work, discipline and a shared understanding that we all are in this together. Success requires a real commitment to making this community the kind of place that our children and their children will be proud to call home."*

-- Coleen J. Seng, Mayor of Lincoln

## UNIVERSITY PLACE: IDEAS AND CONCEPTS

A design workshop was held April 30th and May 1st to explore community revitalization and traffic improvement ideas for the North 48th Street area in University Place. Everyone interested in the area was invited to drop in to share ideas or just listen to the thoughts and ideas that were generated.

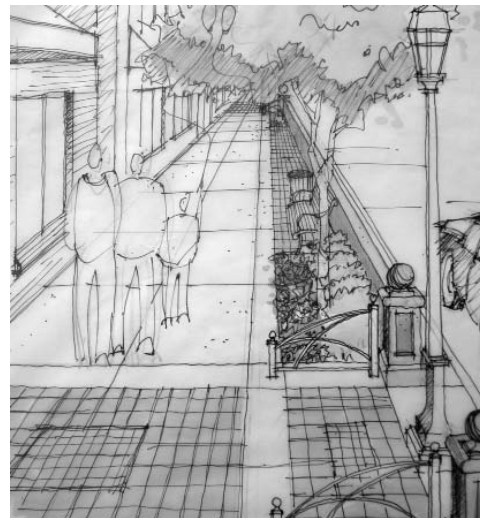
Representatives from *RDG Crose Gardner Shukert* created illustrations of the concepts discussed throughout the two-day process. Some of the ideas generated included: a small decorative wall along 48th Street to provide a buffer and increase safety for pedestrians, a plaza area along St. Paul Avenue, left turn lanes, and more stop lights.

These and other ideas will be studied further and may be part of three alternative plans that will be developed for the area. A con-

sensus building process will be used to select a preferred alternative that addresses both community revitalization and transportation issues.

The workshop was part of the on-going planning partnership between the University Place Community Organization (UPCO), business and property owners in the commercial district, Nebraska Wesleyan University and the City, with the Urban Development Department and the Public Works and Utilities Department as co-project managers.

*RDG*, along with *Schemmer Associates*, are consultants retained by the City to assist in the planning partnership. The resulting plan is expected to be completed in October/November of this year.



*Sketch of what a low wall along 48th Street might look like -- one of several ideas generated at the University Place design workshop.*

**THE PRIMARY MISSION OF THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT IS THE REVITALIZATION AND MAINTENANCE OF LOW AND MODERATE INCOME COMMUNITIES AS PRODUCTIVE AND VIGOROUS PARTS OF THE CITY AS A WHOLE.**